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SP. EMANATION PROCLAMATION

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5¢ Emancipation Proclamation Stamp

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

Chi. Daily News - 8-17-63

Political Expediency?

Latest Stamp Honoring Negroes Gets Old Shuffle

By Ernest A. Kehr

THE five-cent stamp released yesterday in Chicago, opening day of the Century of Negro Progress Exposition, is the fourth commemorative planned by the government to honor American Negroes. And like its three predecessors, this one also seems to be issued largely for the sake of political expediency.

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The stamp, originally authorized and announced by former Postmaster General J. Edward Day on Dec. 27, 1962, was scheduled for release last February. Even that date was a month later than the Jan. 1, which would have been the exact centennial of the Emancipation Proclamation, which it commemorates.

This is the second time that stamps have been issued in the United States on a date completely unassociated with that of the stamps' inscribed, commemorative purpose. The first also was one authorized to "demonstrate the Administration's recognition of Negro contributions toward American advancements." Actually it was an attempt to rectify what had been called "a serious political blunder."

Late in 1939, the New Deal decided to issue seven sets of stamps to honor "Famous Americans" in various fields of the arts and sciences. Organized Negro groups protested that none of their race was depicted. After a hurried conference, the New Dealers authorized the use of Booker T. Washington's portrait on the 10-cent value of the "educators" set.

Instead of pleasing them, this decision annoyed Negro

leaders. "Stamps costing 10 cents are rarely used on regular mail, hence the 'tribute' to Mr. Washington seems to be only a left-handed compliment," a spokesman for the NAACP stated at the time. Protests were so widespread after April 7, 1940, when the stamp was issued at Tuskegee Institute, Ala., that the administration was seriously embarrassed.

IN an effort to rectify the blunder, postal officials checked history, discovered that 1940 happened to be the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the 13th Amendment, which banned slavery, and agreed that a stamp commemorating the event would satisfy all concerned.

There was only one hitch. The anniversary date was Dec. 18, 1940. Releasing the stamp on that day would do the administration no good in its election campaign.

President Roosevelt, Postmaster General Frank C. Walker and several other highly placed officials thereupon decided that the stamp would have to be issued at some event of national interest prior to Election Day. When it was learned that the New York World's Fair had

Four United States stamps which have honored Negroes: Carver issue of 1948, Washington issue of 1940, 13th Amendment issue of 1940 and Emancipation Proclamation stamp.

designated Oct. 20 as "American Negro Day," this occasion was chosen.

President Roosevelt sent his son, Franklin D. Roosevelt Jr., to represent him and to join more than a dozen other officials and Negro leaders in staging what was one of the most elaborate first-day-of-issue ceremonies ever staged up to that time. Speakers used the "Emancipation Monument" design of the three-cent, violet stamp to keynote their verbal tributes to celebrated Negroes of American history and to solicit votes in the coming elections.

THE third stamp honoring a Negro was issued during the 1948 campaign of Harry S. Truman. Though it was then traditional to issue stamps only for Americans who had been dead for at least 25 years, a three-cent stamp was authorized to mark the fifth anniversary of the death of Dr. George Washington Carver.

The stamp released yesterday is printed in red and blue. It was designed by Georg Olden, of White Plains, N.Y., the first Negro to have created the subject for any United States postage stamp.

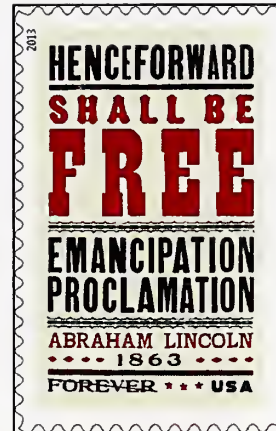


US Postal Service Stamps Commemorating the Emancipation Proclamation

wordpress.com



1963 stamp, commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation



2013 stamp, commemorating the 150th Anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation

These are postage stamps commemorating the 100th and 150th anniversaries of the Emancipation Proclamation.

It's hard to imagine there was a time when stamps only cost 5¢. And I say that as someone who is over 55 years old.

The blog for the Smithsonian National Postal Museum, *Pushing the Envelope*, has details of the First-Day Ceremony for the Emancipation Proclamation Commemorative Stamp. It also has some interesting stories and images about Postal Service commemorations of the Emancipation Proclamation, such as this one:

<http://postalmuseum.typepad.com/.a/6a01157147ecba970c017ee7726ba2970d-popup>

<https://jubiloemancipationcentury.wordpress.com/2013/02/21/us-postal-service-stamps-commemorating-the-emancipation-proclamation/>

